DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 336 341 SP 033 074

AUTHOR Clarke, Desmond C.
TITLE Conceptions of the Principles and Practices of Effective Staff Development: A Caribbean Perspective.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference (Miami, FL, November 27-December 1, 1990).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Context; *Educational Theories; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Teachers; Foreign Countries; Inservice Teacher Education; Reading Instruction; *Staff Development; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Background
IDENTIFIERS Caribbean Islands

ABSTRACT

This research focused on the perceptions of primary teachers (N=337) in the Eastern Caribbean concerning the principles, activities, and delivery strategies that would inform staff development efforts to meet their professional needs. In particular, the research sought to establish whether, given the sharp contextual differences between the Eastern Caribbean and the developed countries in which most of the published research has been done, there was a corresponding difference in orientation with respect to teachers' perceptions of the principles and practices that constitute effective staff development. Findings indicate that none of the independent variables (teaching experience, level of training, grade level taught) had any significant influence on the teachers' perceptions of the principles which should undergird staff development. The data suggest a strong endorsement of the process-oriented approach to staff development and a preference for problem-based active learning modes which are overtly clinical. A high priority was accorded to a team approach to staff development, representing a strong call for more school-based input. The data showed that the teachers endorsed the participatory, process-oriented model prevalent in the literature of more developed countries. (IAH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

CONCEPTIONS OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF EFFECTIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT: A CARIBBEAN PERSPECTIVE

ED336341

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference (Miami, Florida, November 27-December 1, 1990)

By

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN **OTHER THAN PAPER COPY** HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. C. Clarke

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Desmond C. Clarke
University of the West Indies
Cave Hill
St. Michael
Barbados

SP 033074

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Theoretical Context

Two theoretical conceptions of how to effect enhanced teacher performance have dominated the literature and practice of the past decade or so. The technocractic approach, epitomised in the Hunter model, is based on a behaviouristic paradigm and is closely related to the competency-based conception of teacher growth.

Such a mechanistic conception of teacher growth has increasingly been questioned from a Deweyan (Gibboney, 1985) as well as Frierean perspective (Gordon, 1986). In fact current models of teacher growth (e.g. McNergney and Carrier, 1981) emphasise process outcomes, and see teacher ownership as a psychological prerequisite for the commitment, reflection and self-improvement goals inherent in the process paradigms. Complementarily, clinical supervision theory and practice now emphasise process concepts such as collegiality, reflection and teacher autonomy (Garman, Hunter, Haggerston, 1987) rather than the procedural concerns of the classical supervision cycle (Goldhammer, Anderson and Krajowski, 1981).

Staff development practice, as reported in the literature also reflects the shift from technocratic to process models. There has been an increasing sensitivity to the need to incorporate adult learning principles into the design and implementation of staff development (Cameron, 1989). Teacher concerns research (Fuller 1969;

Christensen et al, 1983) has highlighted the qualitative differences in teachers' needs, as they progress through their professional career. The CBAM approach to staff development (Hall and Coombs, 1987; Hall, Loucks, Rutherford and Newlove, 1975) has provided strong empirical support for the view that the perceptions and concerns of the participants about how the staff development innovation will affect them, is critical to the design and implementation of effective staff development.

Iwanicki and McEachern (1984) highlight teacher self-assessment as a powerful strategy for identifying staff development needs. Griffin's (1983) review of the literature identified problem identification by those involved in the staff development activity, and the need to ensure that staff development is responsive to changes in the participants and/or the context, as important research-based staff development principles.

Teacher perceptions clearly undergird all of these concerns and are therefore important data when conceptualising staff development. Indeed the importance of perceptions is poignantly captured by Griffin (1983)

> ... perceptions may not be verifiable ... they are present and active. If one believes something to be so, this belief will have an impact on related phenomena. For staff developers, it

> may be inconsequential in the grand scheme of things ... but in terms of programme operation, it is important to acknowledge the perceptions and act upon them to some desired end. The usefulness of perception as a data source far outweighs their limitations.

Caribbean Specific Factors

Staff development, and perceptions thereof, are necessarily context and culture bound (Sarason, 1982; Griffin, 1983). The question therefore arises whether the research findings which were discussed earlier and which reflect the contextual realities of the developed countries, apply to the radically different contexts of the developing countries. This question is of significant pragmatic importance, given the paucity of the literature from the developing countries in the area. It is the question which provided the major focus for the research reported in this paper. But first it will be necessary to provide enough background information about the Caribbean to enable the reader to appreciate the context of the research.

Teacher Background

The academic and professional qualifications of teachers are important factors affecting teacher perceptions of how staff development should be conceptualised and delivered. There is considerable variation in terms of both teacher characteristics in the Caribbean (Table 1 and 2: Source CIDA 1988, p5) In this regard it is pertinent to note that in the Caribbean preservice training is not a prerequisite for entry into the teaching service. In addition, for various reasons, Ministries of Education often find it impracticable to insist on the minimum academic qualifications for entry into the teaching service.

Table 1

Percentage of Teachers, by Islands, without the Normal Minimal Academic Entry Requirements

ISLAND	PERCENTAGE
Dominica	04
Grenada	23
St. Lucia	36
St. Vincent	56

Table 2

Percentage of Trained Teachers for Selected Islands

ISLAND	PERCENTAGE
Barbados	91.5
Grenada	39.9
St. Vincent	25.9

Scarce Resources

The Eastern Caribbean has limited resources. A major result is that while the region typically spends 6% of GNP on education, not more than 2% is allocated to instructional materials (UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks, 1986-88).

Certain staff development trends have resulted from the above Caribbean factors.

1. Staff development has tended to emphasise product outcomes such as curriculum materials (e.g. the UWI-USAID Primary Education Project) or subject teaching-methodologies (e.g. workshops sponsored by the Organisation for Canadian Overseas Development (OCOD).

2. Given the realities of the teacher characteristics given earlier, and the socio-historical ethos of dependency bequeathed by years of colonial rule, staff development activities have typically been top down.

3. The heavy reliance on externally funded staff development (e.g. OCOD) has tended to result in ad hoc initiatives which are not teacher-owned.

The Present Research

The research focussed on the perceptions of primary teachers in the Eastern Caribbean of the principles, activities and delivery strategies which would inform staff development efforts to meet their professional needs. In particular the research sought to establish whether given the sharp contextual differences between the Eastern Caribbean and the developed countries in which most of the published research has been done, there was a corresponding difference in orientation with respect to teachers' perceptions of the principles and practices which constitute effective staff development.

The selection of the independent variables of the study was based on insights from the literature.

'Teaching experience' was related to the findings of the teacher concerns research of qualitative differences in concerns and implicitly of perceptions, of teachers at different points in their careers. 'Grade level' was based on the qualitative distinction typically made in the 'reading' literature (e.g. Chall, 1982) in terms of 'learning to read' instructional emphasis at the lower grades, and the 'reading to learn' orientation of 'reading' in the higher grades. In this regard it should be noted that the research reported here formed part of an initiative to improve reading instruction in primary schools in the Eastern caribbean. With respect to 'training' it was desirable for pragmatic reasons, to confirm 'training' as an important influence on teachers' perceptions of staff development. In this regard it needs to be recalled that in the Caribbean several of our experienced teachers are untrained.

Procedures

The Staff Development Instrument (SDI) was developed, validated and used to collect the data. The SDI has three sections:

- principles of staff development (23 items);
- staff development activities (9 items); and
- ways of organising staff development (6 items).

The SDI reflect the participatory ethos highlighted in the literature review.

Validity

Content validity of the SDI was established using the standard practice of expert judges. They were asked to assess the extent to which the SDI reflected the process orientation advocated in the literature reported earlier. In addition, the Caribbean-based specialists were asked to judge the ecological validity of the SDI in the light of their research and development experience in the Caribbean.

Piloting

The instrument was piloted to establish test-re-test reliability and construct validity. Exploratory factor analysis was used for the latter. The sampling procedures used were as outlined below for the main study, except that only one island, Barbados, was used. The sample size was 126. Persons who participated in the pilot were excluded from the main study.

The reliability coefficients were .762 (Principles), .964 (Activities) and .967 (Ways of organising). The factor analysis yielded the following five factors:

- planning (5 items);
- practical focus (4 items);
- delivery strategies (4 items); and
- participation (3 items).

An illustrative item, from each cluster, is given below.

- Developing teachers' skills in analyzing their own professional strengths and weakgneiss (empowerment).
- Designing inservice activities which are appropriate to the participants' background and teaching experience (planning).
- Focussing on problems the teachers will face on their return to the classroom (practical focus).
- Meeting the needs of the participants as adult learners (delivery strategies).
- Teacher input into the planning of the inservice activities (participation).

Sampling

Given the geographical spread of the Eastern Caribbean islands in which the research was done - Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, St. Kitts and St. Vincent - cluster sampling was used, with the school as the sampling unit. The actual procedures used were as indicated below.

1. The primary schools in each island were stratified as urban, suburban and rural based on the Ministry of Education data. Stratification was necessary to enhance representativeness given that the rural schools tend to be smaller and to have fewer resources than the urban and suburban schools. The schools used were drawn randomly from the total number of schools in each stratum to reflect the weighting indicated in the Ministry data.

2. Each school unit selected represented 6 teachers, i.e. the teachers for infants A, infants B, and classes 1,2,3,4. These were the classes related to the research questions of the study. In large schools where there was more than one teacher at a particular class level, the teacher to represent that level was randomly drawn.

The effective response rate, based on the fully completed questionnaires was 94.7%. The response rate was high across all islands (Table 3).

Table 3

Response Rate by Island

ISLAND	QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED	QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED	PERCENTAGE
Antigua	21	21	100
Barbados	150	137	91
Grenada	78	75	96
St. Kitts	18	18	100
St. Vincent	102	86	84

Results of the SDI Analysis

Hypothesis I

There will be no significant differences among the mean factor scores of beginning, mid-career and experienced teachers with respect to their perceptions of staff development principles.

Table 4

Effect of Experience on
Perceptions of Staff Development

SOURCE	DF	MS	F
A. Between	2	31.040	
Error	322	13.375	2.231
B. Within	4	5596.205	1556.509*
Error	1288	3.595	
A x B	8	2.724	.758
Error	1288	3.595	

* p <.001

The ANOVA results indicated the following:

1. There were significant within-group effects due to teaching experience.

2. There were no significant between-groups or interaction effects.

Hypotheses 2

There will be no significant differences between the factor mean scores of trained and untrained teachers with respect to their perceptions of staff development principles.

Table 5

Effect of Training on
Principles of Staff Development

SOURCE	DF	MS	F
A. Between	1	133.200	10.161**
Error	323	13.112	
B. Within	4	5111.268	1423.623**
Error	1292	3.590	
A x B	4	3.487	.971
Error	1292	3.590	

** p <.001

The ANOVA results indicated that there were significant between- and within-group differences, but no significant interaction effects.

Hypotheses 3

There will be no significant differences among the mean factor scores of infant, lower junior, and upper junior teachers with respect to their perceptions of staff development principles.

Table 6

Effect of Class Level Taught on Principles of Staff Development

SOURCE	DF	MS	F
A. Between	2	23.691	1.766
Error	322	13.419	
B. Within	4	5482.722	1632.115*
Error	1288	3.580	
A x B	8	5.222	1.459
Error	1288	3.580	

** p <.001

The ANOVA data suggest that there were no significant differences between the various groups based on grade level taught.

Staff Development Activities

Table 7 presents the teachers' preferences for various kinds of staff development activities. It is pertinent to note that the instructions precluded using the same rating for more than one activity.

Table 7

Teachers' Preference for
Various Staff Development Activities

ACTIVITY	BT	MCT	ET	TR	NTR	INF	LJ	UJ
1. Discussion	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
2. Small groups	7	4	4	7	4	4	5	4
3. Demonstration lessons	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
4. Learn by doing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5. Lecture	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
6. Audio-visual	5	5	7	5	6	7	6	5
7. Professional reading	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
8. Observe experienced teachers	6	6	5	6	5	6	4	7
9. Work on instructional packages	4	7	6	4	7	5	7	6

The main findings with respect to staff development activities were:

1. There was a very strong preference for 'hands on' experiences and modelling.

2. Discussion strategies were also highly rated.

3. Lecturing and professional reading were not highly rated. This is particularly true of lecturing, which is more suited to content coverage than the active learning inherent in finding 1. above.

Spearman rank correlations were used with respect to each independent variable to establish the degree of consensus with respect to preferred staff development (SD) activities. All hypothesis were in null form. The rank correlation matrices (Tables 8,9,10) are presented below.

Table 8

Preferences of the Various Experience Groups (DM Activities)

	BT	MCT	EI
BI	-	-	-
MCT	0.850*	-	-
EI	0.850*	0.950*	-

* p <.01

Table 9

Preferences of Trained and Untrained Teacher (SD) Activities

	NTR	TR
NTR	1.000	-
TR	0.833*	1.000

* p <.02

Table 10

Preferences of Teachers of Different Grades (SD) Activities

	INF	LJ	UJ
INF	-	-	-
LJ	0.917*	-	-
UJ	0.950*	0.900*	-

** p <.01

The rank correlation data suggest considerable consensus across the various groups, with respect to the preference for staff development activities which promote active learning.

Ways of Organising Staff Development

Table 11 presents the teachers' preference for various ways of organising staff development. Once again it is pertinent to note that the same rating could not be useful for more than one item.

Table 11

Teachers' Preference re Ways of Organising Staff Development

WAYS OF ORGANISING	BT	MCT	ET	TR	NTR	INF	LJ	UJ
1. School-based	4	3	3	4	3	3	5	3
2. U.W.I	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	4
3. Ministry of Education	3	4	5	3	5	4	3	5
4. Teachers' College	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
5. Teachers' Union	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
6. Team (i.e. 1-4 above)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

1. The collaborative approach using the combined insights and competences of the schools, the Teachers' College, the U.W.I and the Ministries of Education.

2. The Teachers' College.

The Spearman rank correlation data related to the three null hypotheses for the three independent variables will now be presented.

Table 12

Perceptions of the Different Experience Groups (Organising SD)

	BT	MCT	EI
BT	1.000		
MCT	0.829*	1.000	
ET	0.771*	0.943**	1.000

* p >.05 ** p <.05

Teaching experience had an effect on the teachers' perceptions of preferred strategies. The data suggest two distinct groups - the beginning teachers and the more experienced and mid-career teachers. There is high consensus among the latter as reflected by the significant correlation.

Table 13

Perceptions of Trained and Untrained Teachers (Organising SD)

	TR	NTR
TR	1.000	
NTR	0.829*	1.000

* P >.05

Training did not exert a significant effect on the teachers' perceptions of how staff development should be organised.

Table 14

Perceptions of Teachers of Different Grade Levels (Organising SD)

	INF	LJ	UJ
INF	1.000		
LJ	0.829*	1.000	
UJ	0.943**	0.771*	1.000

* p <.05 ** p <.05

There was a significant positive correlation between the infant and the upper junior teachers.

Discussion

The focus of the three segments of the SDI will be used to structure the discussion.

Staff Development Principles

With respect to the conceptualisation of staff development, the finding that none of the independent variables had any significant influence on the teachers' perceptions of the principles which should undergird staff development, suggests a strong endorsement of the process oriented approach to staff development embodied in the SDI. This finding is particularly interesting with respect to the independent variable teaching experience. For given the Caribbean realities with respect to the wide variation in qualifications and skills among Caribbean teachers as discussed earlier in this paper, it had been expected that beginning and/or untrained teachers would have preferred a more top-down, technocratic approach to staff development. Their endorsement of the participatory, process ethos of the SDI therefore suggests that any training that is provided for these sub-groups, should be done in a way which

respects their fragile professional self-concepts while providing scope for their cumulative professional growth. Glickman's (1985) strategy of developmental supervision would seem to have considerable applicability in such a context. The same holds good for clinical supervision if it is perceived in terms of process.

Staff Development Activities

Hogben (1982) described the teacher's world as one of praxis, which leads teachers to adopt a clinical rather than theoretical orientation to training. In addition, in the literature problem-based learning was highlighted as the preferred adult learning strategy. The preference for problem-based active learning modes which are overtly clinical, indicates that these theorectical perspectives are relevant in the Caribbean context, despite the peculiar teacher characteristics variables discussed earlier. It is particularly important to note the high degree of consensus across all groups on this point, as indicated by the rank correlation data.

Ways of Organising Staff Development

In terms of the teachers' perceptions of how staff development should be implemented, the points of

major interest are those in which the data indicated trends which are at variance with current practices in the Caribbean. The high priority accorded a team approach to staff development represents a strong call for more school-based inputs into staff development initiatives. This trend is particularly strong if the data on ways of organising staff development are taken in conjunction with the data on 'activities' discussed earlier. The team approach makes obvious sense especially in the context of the limited human and financial resources noted earlier in this paper. However, it needs to be noted that such an approach would be institutionally at variance with the top-down and instructionally compartmentalised approaches which currently dominate staff development initiatives in the Caribbean.

The findings with respect to an expanded role for the Teachers' Colleges are particularly interesting. Currently Teachers' Colleges tend to concern themselves almost exclusively with tackling the challenge of initial training in an effort to decrease significantly the percentage of untrained practising teachers. The data suggest a strong call for a different and expanded role - a role in which Teachers' Colleges are change agents within the clinical framework so overwhelmingly endorsed with r spect to 'activities'.

Prima facie the low rating of instructional

packages contrasts sharply with the Richardson (1987) finding that materials represented a major task concern of primary teachers in the Eastern Caribbean. The apparent conflict might reside in the nature of the present research, in which materials development was being assessed, in terms of a staff development strategy. It is possible that teacher experiences with materials development - a major activity of staff development initiatives in the Caribbean - may not have been process related, thus conflicting with the participatory ethos endorsed by the groups. Further investigations is needed to elucidate the reasons underlying the low rating accorded to such a widespread practice.

Summary

This research had a pragmatic purpose. The researcher wanted to establish whether the process oriented strategy advocated in the literature on the developed world, was perceived by Eastern Caribbean teachers as applicable to their context. The aim was to obtain data to guide staff development initiatives on 'reading'. The data showed that the teachers endorsed the participatory, process oriented model in the literature. The challenge therefore is to find strategies which provide structure, while maintaining the process emphasis which is essential to teacher growth, however small the increments may be, given the Caribbean realities.

References

Cameron, J. (1988). Using networks to promote staff development. Journal of Staff Development, 9 (1) 40-43.

Christensen, J., Burke, P., Fessler, R., and Hagstrom, D. (1983). Stages of teachers' concerns, implications for professional development, (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 227 052).

Fuller, F. (1969). Concerns of teachers: A develcpment conceptualisation. American Educational Research Journal, 6 (2), 207-226.

Garman, N., Glickman, C.D., Hunter, M., and Haggerston, N.L. (1987). Conflicting conceptions of clinical supervision and the enhancement of professional growth and renewal: Point and counterpoint. Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 2 (2), 152-177.

Goldhammer, R., Anderson, R.H., and Krajewski, R.J. (1980). Clinical Supervision, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston.

Gordon, B.G. (1986). The use of emancipatory pedagogy in teacher education. Journal of Educational Thought, 20 (2), 59-66.

Griffin, G.A. (1983). Implications of research for staff development programmes. Elementary School Journal, 83 (4), 414-426.

Hall, G.E. and Loucks, S.F. (1976). Teacher concerns as a basis for facilitating and personalising staff development. Teachers' College Record, 80 (1), 36-53.

Hall, G.E., Loucks, S.F., Rutherford, G.I., and Newlove, B.N. (1975). Levels of use of the innovation. A framework for analysing innovation adoption. The Journal of Teacher Education, 26 (1) 52-56.

Hogben, D. (1982). The clinical mind. Some implications for educational research and teacher training. The South Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 10 (1), 1-8.

Iwanicki, E.F., and McEachern, L. (1984). Using teacher self-assessment to identify staff development needs. Journal of Teacher Education, 35 (2), 38-41.

McNergney, R.F., and Carter, C.A. (1981). Teacher Development, N.Y., New York: MacMillan.

Richardson, A.G. (1987). Perceived problems of Eastern Caribbean student-teachers: Some Caribbean findings. In D.C. Clarke (Ed.) Report of the Sixth Biennial Eastern Caribbean Standing Conference on Teacher Education, pp 19-36), Cave Hill, Barbados: University of the West Indies, Faculty of Education.

Sarason, S.B. (1982). The culture of the school and the problem of change. Boston. Allyn and Bacon Inc.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (1988). Statistical Yearbook. Paris: UNESCO.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (1987). Statistical Yearbook. Paris: UNESCO.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (1986). Statistical Yearbook. Paris: UNESCO.

***